Dear Friend,

I have just mailed a newspaper to your address, which contains the proceedings of a reform convention, recently held in Oakland, Clinton Co. Ohio. You should have been apprised of this sooner, but ill health is all the apology I have to offer for the delay.

You may not harmonise fully, with every sentiment embodied in the constitution, or agree with all the detail of the Society's proceedings. I am confident however, that you will be deeply interested in the great object it has in view, namely, the complete restoration of the whole family of Man from its present fallen, degraded and brutal condition. In every part of the globe, humanity lies crushed & bleeding.– The greatest portion of the Eight hundred millions, which, at this moment inhabit this great Store house of suffering, wrong, and outrage, called earth, are pennyless, & destitute, in a state of partial or absolute slavery, degraded almost to the condition of brutes, and are the mere instruments, in the hands of the great and the ambitious, for the gratification of their selfish propensities.– The one class is forced to incessant toil and drudgery, to secure a pittance, from those who have monopolised the earth and its products. the other class is forced to devote their time in devising ways & means and maturing plans to preserve their possessions, and to keep the masses in subjection. Instead therefore, of making themselves acquainted with the nature of man, his wants and desires, and then so to arrange the social system, that it may harmonise with those wants and desires, all the faculties of man and the mighty energies which he possesses, have, from the necessity of the case, been exerted to resist, on the one hand, the encroachments of wealth and power, and on the other, the inventing and exercising new instruments of oppression.

Every man's interest is antagonistical to that of his neighbor, and what is true of individuals, is also true with respect to nations.– Poverty and riches, scarcity and abundance, intelligence & ignorance, tyranny and servility, everywhere incongruously exist, while war, murder, piracy, slavery, robbery, fraud, poverty, disease and premature death, and a long catalogue of evils, constantly mar the peace and harmony of society. An organised Church & State, in some form or other, have always existed, and have been regarded as remedial, but upon analysis, we find that they operate as causes to perpetuate the very evils they are designed to remove.

The State, instead of harmonising society to the natural wants of man, has sought to suppress his passions, by pains and penalties. And the Church considering the state of Society in which man is placed, as the best that can exist in this world, has written him down a depraved being, endeavors to reconcile him to his present condition, promises him a blissful future, if he will love God, honor the King, and yield implicit obedience to all the requirements of the Church.–

Man is conscious that he was created for a more exalted destiny. The intuitions of his own nature, bid him throw off his chains, and rise from the dust. The Millenium of the sacred writers, and the golden age of the poets, have buoyed up the drooping heart in every age and every condition of life.

The harmony of the material world, its ability to supply our wants, and the constant welling up of the soul, for a purer and better state, convinces every reflecting mind, that a benevolent Creator designed Man for happiness, in the present state of existence, in spite of all the teachings of the church.

That the Paradise of Eden, is to be regained at some period or other, there are but few who doubt. by what peculiar means this heavenly boon is to be secured, is yet altogether problematical. Ignorance is the handmaid of suffering and crime. All the suffering of the race, is the necessary penalty for the violation of the immutable laws of the Deity. To ascertain then, what these laws are, and our relation to them, to the external world, and to each other, constitutes the great principle of reform.

Philosophers, Legislators, and Ecclesiastics, have overlooked this.– The true philosophy of reform, is to ascertain and remove the cause, which produces a given wrong. The temperance, abolition, and non-resistance reformers, have adopted this principle. Each class discovered that the evils peculiar to each system, were the legitimate effects of the system itself, which, in some form or other must exist, as long as the great cause was allowed to remain undisturbed.– Hence the attack upon the system which allows one man to hold another as property, hence their assault

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upon physical resistance, under all circumstances. But upon a deeper investigation we find, that war, slavery, and intemperance, are but the effects of some cause lying farther back. May not slavery, war, intemperance, poverty, theft, caste and crime in almost every form, be traced back to one great cause? At present the object of the whole race may be reduced down to one principle of action — namely to live. To procure the means of subsistance to satisfy the artificial demands of society, — to lay up something for future wants, and to leave for their children an inheritance, which shall enable them to resist the encroachments which society always makes upon the helpless and unprotected, is the great object of life.

The earth and all its products, the joint property of the whole race has been monopolised by a few individuals, either by trade or force, who make governments the mere instruments in their hand to protect them in their wholesale plunder. May not then, this question of the admitted right of individual ownership in the soil & its products, be the great cause of all causes, which makes man, practically, an enemy to his species — which has filled the world with blood, and which retards the onward progress of human redemption? The times demand the existence of an association, which will not be satisfied with the pruning off the branches of the tree of evil, but will, with a giants power lay the axe at its root, that root, trunk and branches may perish together. To accomplish this work "the Society of Universal Inquiry and Reform" was instituted.

By the 2d Article in the constitution, you will perceive that the platform is broad as humanity itself. The great question to which this society will direct its attention for the present will be, the right of individual property and its influence upon society. In investigating a question of this character, it is absolutely indispensable that facts, touching the almost omnipotent control which capital exerts, should be made public.

Will you answer as many of the following queries as your inclination and circumstances will allow, and forward them to me at your earliest convenience.

1st The nominal value of the soil, stocks and other private or associated property in the U. States, and its probable income?
2d The number of producers and their average wages?
3d The number of Capitalists worth over five hundred dollars and their average income?
4th The number of Non producers, which will include most of the women, the children, servants, soldiers, naval sailors, and officers in church and state, lawyers, doctors, Merchants clerks, bankers, beggars, prisoners, prostitutes &c &c
5th The money expended to sustain the whole machinery of government, including the town, county, State, and national expenditures?
6th The amt. of Capital invested in fortifications, arsenals, Naval Ships, Navy yards, &c &c the Amt. of Capital invested in Merchant Ships?
7th The number of Sailors employed and the average wages?
8th The number of Officers and their average wages?
9th The number of Ecclesiastical officers and their average salaries?
10th The value of the property held by these ecclesiastical institutions?
11th The number of Lawyers and their average income?
12th The number of Physicians and their average income?
13th The Amt. of Capital invested in theological, medical, law & literary institutions and the annual income of the whole?
14th The number of prisoners?
15th The number of paupers and the annual expense?
16th The number of laborers which mechanical and scientific power in use represents?
17th To ascertain if the want of money is not the direct cause of all the crimes, in the country?
18th To ascertain the number of persons supposed to be criminal who have escaped punishment in consequence of bail?
19th Whether prostitution and seduction are not caused by poverty, or by the influence

which wealth and standing has over poverty and ignorance?

20th To find out as many causes as possible in which poor and orphan children, and other dependants, have been abused and maltreated by those bound to cherish and protect them?

21st To develope the various means by which money can exonerate a criminal from punishment?

22d To state facts in relation to marriages which originated in a desire for property, standing, or promotion?

These queries might be run out to almost indefinite length, but this will answer the purpose for the present.

It is the object of the Society to ascertain the best principle of associating together in communities — but more of this on some future occasion.

Any suggestion from you however will be very acceptable.

There is to be a special meeting of the Society for the discussion of the question of private property and of cooperative associations in Worcester, ~~about~~ on the 28th & 29th of March, and the first annual meeting will be holden in the City of New-York, anniversary week, which will be about the 12th of May next. It is to be hoped that you will be present on that occasion.

In behalf of the Society. Very respectfully. Yours for truth and equality.

Boston Feb. 28 1843 — J. A. Collins. Cor. Secretary.

Single

BOSTON
MAR

M. W. Chapman &
Caroline Weston
Boston
Mass

Feb 28. 1843.
Caroline from Boston.
about all sorts of
things.

Ms. A.9.2.18.13